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ABSTRACT

If teaching is the effective communication of knowledge, the teacher first must be knowledgeable about the subject being taught. Communicating that knowledge to students is just as important. One standard teaching method is the lecture. A lecture is prepared before class by the teacher and should include not only the facts to be learned by the students, but also the insights and experiences of the teacher as the intellectual master of the topic. It is a powerful teaching tool, but it requires time and effort on the part of the teacher. This guide offers suggestions for becoming a successful lecturer. The chapters are arranged from the general topic of lecturing to the specific steps required to prepare a lecture.

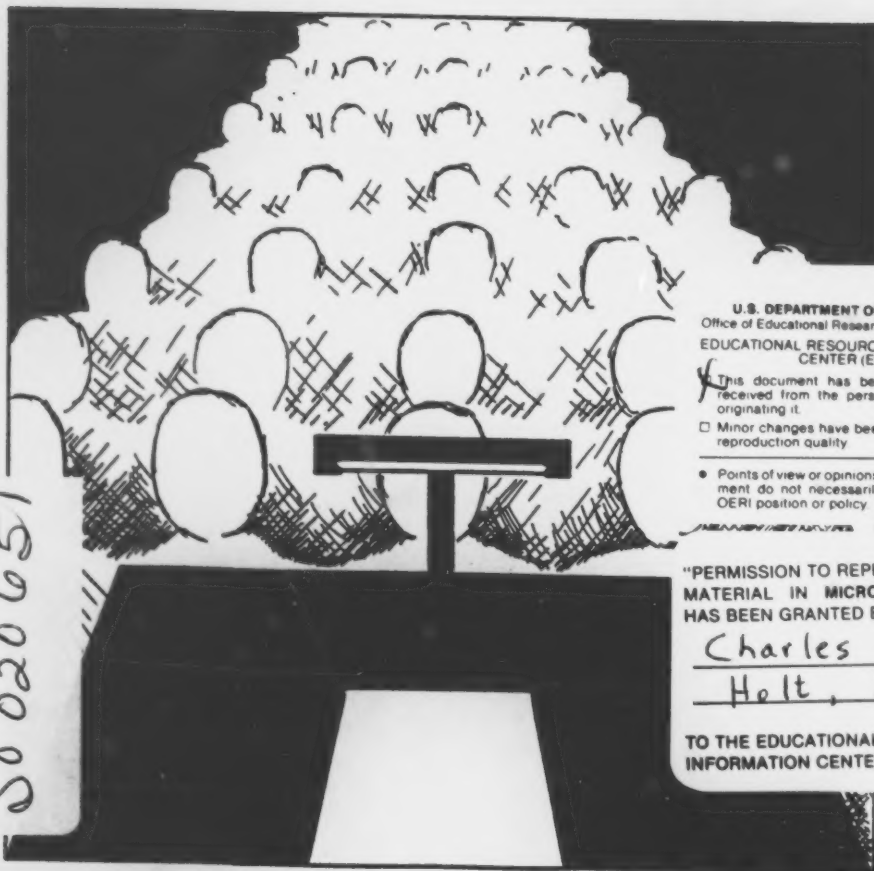
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THE ART of LECTURING

By
Charles Holt



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THE ART OF LECTURING

C.E. HOLT



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Preface

I have been a college professor teaching primarily undergraduate students for about twenty years. Classroom instruction remains as much a challenge now as it was when I began my career. In another twenty years, I will have learned much more, but as of right now, I have some ideas about what I should teach, how I should teach, and why I should teach my way.

Everything included in this book is personal to me and my teaching. It is my way of teaching. As such, it is hardly a reflection on others or other ideas. On the other hand, just because what I discuss here works for me is no guarantee it will work for others. I am simply taking the time to put on paper in a fairly systematic manner my thoughts on my years of teaching at the university level.

Many former teachers, professors, and colleagues deserve thanks for their contributions to my career which makes it possible for me to now reflect on my profession, and to all of them I remain forever in gratitude. To those students who have patiently endured my maturation as a professor I, too, say thank you. Most especially, I should like to remember my family for their continuous encouragement for so many years. None of the above, however, should be held responsible for the contents of this book.

THE ART OF LECTURING

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Introduction

What is teaching? That is a good question, and one that needs to be answered before the art of lecturing as a teaching method is to be explored as the main theme of this book. Teaching is a profession with some generally accepted parameters. The specific way one teaches, though, is a matter best left to each teacher. As a result, the answer given here will be a personal one reflecting the views of the author of this book.

To begin, teaching is instructing students. That is, the teacher provides information that students are expected to learn. So, without instruction, there is no teaching. The student may obtain information from many other sources, including textbooks, handouts, computer programs, or maps. Through instruction, the teacher guides the student to the appropriate sources of information for a specific topic.

Furthermore, teaching is explaining the information. The teacher uses examples to illustrate points, and assists the student with organizing the information in a usable way. A teacher must also use interaction, such as question-and-answer or discussion, to make sure understanding is occurring.

Teaching also requires testing the students to gauge the success of the teaching. Exams are a standard part of education. It takes some skill and experi-

ience for a teacher to prepare questions that test what the teacher wants to be tested.

These three components are all manifestations of teaching. Even more fundamental, teaching is the sharing of one's expertise with students. Teaching is primarily the communication process between the teacher and students. Basic to that communication is knowledge. Good teaching does not occur if either communication or knowledge is missing.

Teaching, then, is primarily an intellectual activity. It is the main reason we have schools and formal education. Students are expected to learn to read, write, think analytically, and be able to add and subtract. This is not controversial or even usually debated by the experts. There is room for debate about what additional responsibilities schools might have, and about the role of teachers in the total education of students.

If teaching is the effective communication of knowledge, the teacher must first be knowledgeable about the subject being taught. That is why it is fundamental in American education to require teachers to have demonstrated some academic expertise in the subjects they teach. For college teachers, it is often a Ph.D. degree, and for high school teachers, it is a major, minor, or a specific area of study in the appropriate field.

Communicating that knowledge to students is just as important. One

standard teaching method is the lecture. The teacher stands before students and orally communicates with students. It is a common form of instruction for one person to pass on his/her expertise to a group. In this country, we have classrooms and mass education, which means we have one teacher and twenty or more students. Given this situation, teachers often use the lecture as their best option.

A lecture is prepared before class by the teacher and should include not only the facts to be learned by the students, but the insights and experiences of the teacher as the intellectual master of the topic. It is a powerful teaching tool, but it requires time and effort on the part of the teacher.

Effective communication does not require becoming a consummate actor or a jokester. A lecture can be "boring," yet still fascinating. The distinction is that if students are to find the subject believable, the teacher must also be believable. A major ingredient in teaching is a love for that which is being taught. Students know whether a teacher is simply going through the motions, so they are apt to do the same, learning only what is required and only because it is required of them. On the other hand, students can appreciate and learn more from a teacher who perhaps lacks much charisma, but who has mastered the material. Students are more apt to learn not only the material, but the reasons why the teacher loves to teach it.

It is almost impossible not to become a little excited about a lecture if one has spent considerable time preparing for it. In fact, it is almost impossible for a teacher to be boring if he/she is teaching something he/she really enjoys and knows a lot about. The art of lecturing is the careful preparation of the teacher to lecture, the detailed organization of the lecture itself, and the involvement of the students in the learning process. The teacher who follows the steps and suggestions included in the following chapters is almost guaranteed to become a better lecturer and, as a consequence, a better teacher.

It is a commentary on our schools that so little attention is paid to class preparation and so much to other activities. Taking attendance, patrolling the halls, taking tickets at ball games, and the other duties of teachers are all important. But even more important are the books that are read, the notes taken, the thoughts given to teaching.

Good lecturing requires many hours of quiet contemplation by the teacher. One must become absorbed in the material and reach a state of knowledge sufficient to inspire students to want to learn it. The successful teacher who lectures, therefore, does not always also have time to do all those other duties expected of teachers.

To summarize, teaching requires a certain amount of withdrawal from an active way of life in order for the teacher to better come to grips with the material

being taught. The reality of teaching is intellectual ability, and most other duties assigned to teachers are a distraction from that reality. In fact, lecturing is one of the most difficult of all teaching techniques to master because it requires so much intellectual creativity on the part of the teacher. Not only does the teacher need to understand the material, but the teacher must be able to explain it to students. It is a challenge even the most experienced teachers find stimulating.

Chapter One

The Context

Those who teach in American schools typically possess at least an undergraduate degree from an accredited college. Many also have advanced degrees, some have published widely, and a few are well-known experts in their academic fields. Never before has this country enjoyed a better educated teaching profession than today.

Can it be assumed, then, that once a student earns a college degree and is qualified to become a teacher, he/she has the knowledge and skills to share his/her expertise with students in the classrooms of this country? Or should it be assumed that a college degree provides the framework for a lifetime of continuing education? If it is the latter, a teacher must approach the classroom with the realization that the real work of becoming a competent teacher begins after the teacher preparation program ends.

Undergraduate students are usually required to learn incredible amounts of material in their classes. In addition, they write countless papers, participate in seemingly endless intellectual debates, and attempt to rationally cope with an impersonal, even mindless bureaucracy.

Once the student becomes a teacher, most of what they worked so hard to memorize for their college exams is quickly forgotten. The papers they wrote seem

quite ordinary and hardly useful now. The issues students debated back then in college are not that important any more. At least learning to deal with the bureaucratic maze while in college will have a direct benefit for the teacher, who now must cope with an even more complex administrative structure.

In addition, a college student learns how to study, write, think, debate, and deal with an impersonal world. The more opportunities the student has as an undergraduate to develop academic skills, the easier it will be to become a successful teacher.

At all levels of education, then, the purpose for being in the classroom is more than simply teaching students to master a certain amount of material. It is also the teacher's obligation to instill in students skills that will serve them well throughout their lives. It is clear that mastery of material and learning to think logically go hand-in-hand, and it takes both intelligence and experience for the teacher to be able to find a suitable balance.

Most teach in schools where they have little or no control over who takes their classes. To reach all 20, 40 even 100 students who are sitting in a class for probably very different reasons is impossible. There is no magic secret one can discover to suddenly become a great teacher, and no teacher education program can hope to train one to cope with a diverse student population. The successful teacher

is an optimist who never gives up hope in reaching every student and who is always looking for better ways to teach.

A typical three credit college class meets for about 2400 minutes. The time can be divided into 48 classes of 50 minutes each, 40 classes of 60 minutes each, 32 classes lasting 75 minutes each, or 16 classes of 150 minutes each. Which ever way the time is divided into class meetings, there are some obvious limitations to what can be accomplished in a single college class. It is a bit much, for example, to expect a student to successfully complete a class and be fully prepared to go out and teach that same subject for an entire year in a high school.

A typical high school teacher has each class between 40 and 50 minutes a day, five times each week for an entire school year. Can you imagine appearing before the same group over 150 times and being interesting and well-informed each and every time? No single college class, no academic major, not even an entire undergraduate or even graduate curriculum is able to prepare a teacher for such an undertaking.

Of course, not all class time is taken up with teaching. Some time is spent on the many necessary routine matters expected of a teacher. Attendance is taken, homework assignments are given, and disruptions are frequently being dealt with each day. Testing takes up some time as well, either for short quizzes as part of the daily class, or for an examination that lasts the entire class period. In addition, some

classes are missed for holidays, attendance at conferences, sickness, or some other reason.

Perhaps the teacher would say, "Thank goodness for the interruptions." It might be impossible to expect a teacher to be fully prepared to teach the entire time allotted every day. As will be discussed later, it takes several hours to adequately prepare for an hour of teaching. The beginning teacher seldom gets far enough ahead of the students to be able to skip an evening working on the next day's class. And the new teacher is often given two or more different classes to teach, thus doubling or even tripling the amount of preparation required.

There may be days when the teacher is forced to "lecture" from some pages copied from another textbook. It is always a real challenge to make class interesting on those days. Surely, one might think, the principal will quickly figure out what is happening in your class. There is also the fear that the day will come when the department chairperson will call the new teacher in for a chat and suggest it might be best to find another profession.

Yet, the years pass and in all probability nothing will ever be said to a teacher about quality of instruction. The pressure to improve as a teacher, therefore, is self-imposed and without much external support or encouragement. Quality instruction is something the individual teacher must define for him or herself. The academic world is a lonely world.

Even if it is granted that too much time is devoted to non-teaching duties, many hours still remain for purposeful instruction. In this book, the focus is on one way to spend instructional time in the classroom. To begin, let us look at some of the demands placed on a teacher who is serious about teaching.

It is probably typical for a college professor to teach two or three different courses each semester for a total of no more than five different courses each year. This means that a professor must prepare for about 100 hours of instruction each semester or 200 per academic year. In high school, a teacher with just two different preparations has to prepare for ten different classes each week, for a total of over 300 each year.

How much time does it take to get ready for this many preparations? For a college professor, a good rule-of-thumb is approximately twenty-six hours for every new class of one hour to teach. Revisions of existing materials take less time, but reading a single book and incorporating new information into the class notes might take eight to ten hours. And this does not count the time it takes a professor to review the material before class. At least the college teacher should have time each day before class to at least look over the upcoming class presentation.

However, most high school teachers get get no more than a single planning period each day. Nor do they have much secretarial or student help for typing, grading papers,

or other tasks. Most of a teacher's school day is taken up with that day's activities, and little time can be found to prepare for classes. If a high school teacher with two courses spends just two hours each night in preparation for each course, the teacher is faced with an additional four hours of daily work. Added to the seven hours of school, the teacher is already faced with an eleven hour day, and that's not counting grading papers, collecting tickets at ball games, or other obligations required of teachers. No wonder there is so little administrative pressure on teachers to be effective instructors. If there was pressure, there would be no teachers left to teach because teaching would become an impossible task.

The teacher might have wide discretion how to teach, but it is usually already determined for the teacher what to teach in each course. Each course will have a syllabus of some sort, and it will probably have a textbook or assigned readings. In a college course, the professor might be very knowledgeable in most of the topics to be taught in the course, but it would be too much to expect a professor to be an expert in everything to be covered. Sometimes a professor has to start from the beginning and research a topic before being able to teach it to students. After all, if one is certified to teach, it is commonly assumed a teacher can teach anything the teacher has a major or minor in, whether or not specific courses have been taken in that subject. Too often a high school teacher is given a class for which he or she has almost no college preparation. Can you

imagine the time it takes for that teacher to become familiar enough with the material to present it in an interesting and accurate way?

The first time one teaches a course, therefore, one is faced with an almost impossible challenge. It might get easier each time the course is taught, but it is still necessary to continue to add new material. Reading new articles and books and incorporating recent knowledge into the presentations, adjusting the presentations to fit new textbooks, or just revising weak presentations is a continuing challenge to the most experienced of teachers. And all of this is background work to the mental preparation it takes to effectively teach students. Teachers must also demonstrate a love of learning to students if they are to convince students learning is important to them.

An undergraduate degree, then, cannot be expected to provide one with all the knowledge one will need as a teacher. That is not to say that what one learns in college is not important or necessary. It simply means that an undergraduate degree is only a start. Formal education must also provide one with the skills necessary for the continued acquisition of knowledge while teaching. That means the ability to research topics, the ability to organize materials for presentation, and the ability to effectively communicate with the students in the classroom. It also means being able to cope with the reality of the school environment and to fit into the structure of American education.

There are any number of ways to teach students, and most teachers quickly learn to use many of them. The two most popular teaching techniques in the United States are using the textbook and teaching by lecturing. Many of the so-called authorities in education agree that both the textbook and the lecture method are misused by the typical teacher, and it is common to find teacher educators strongly opposed to these two approaches to classroom instruction. Experts are continually offering a variety of alternative methods they claim are far more effective. In theory, their arguments are hard to disagree with. However, after years of hot debate and concerted efforts by teacher educators to convince teachers to use other methods, the fact is that the textbook and the lecture remain the staple teaching techniques for most teachers.

In this book, the reality of American education is the starting point, and ways are offered to improve instruction by using the textbook and the lecture method more effectively. If, despite the almost universal cry against lecturing, teachers still utilize the lecture method more than any other instructional technique, it only makes sense, then, to share some constructive ideas on the art of lecturing.

If lecturing is an art, one must be trained in it if one is to become a master lecturer. Without quality training, the teacher might never understand how effective lecturing can be as a teaching tool. Too often the lecture is thought of as the teacher giving factual information

for students to copy down for the next examination. That is the start, but there is much more to lecturing than that.

The main thesis, then, is that lecturing can be effective as a method of instruction, but it requires both knowledge of how to prepare appropriate lectures and devotion and commitment on the part of the teacher. In addition to the countless hours that must be spent in preparation, especially on topics one never studied in college, the lecturer must be one who enjoys the quiet solitude of individual study. For lecturing also requires some preliminary reflection on the implications of what the teacher is trying to accomplish in teaching the topic. Sometimes the teacher knows the subject well enough to lecture without notes, but most of the time the teacher must also spend many quiet hours composing the lecture. In fact, the effective lecturer is so consumed by the undertaking, there is little time to otherwise live a very active lifestyle.

A good lecturer is not born, but has learned the skills. The purpose of this book is to share some of the ways one might effectively learn to communicate with students via the lecture method. The chapters are arranged to go from the general topic of lecturing to the specific steps required to prepare a lecture.

Too often the teacher stops after having made a lesson plan. The second chapter suggests some of the advantages of lecturing. Of course, there are also a few pitfalls, and these should be analyzed.

The third chapter discusses some characteristics of a good lecturer. This chapter also includes a discussion of distracting mannerisms and how to deal with them.

The fourth chapter offers some step-by-step guidelines on researching and organizing a lecture. It is the most important chapter of the book, and it should provide useful suggestions to anyone who lectures.

Just as important to teaching, one can argue, is what the students are learning. The fifth chapter discusses preparing students to take notes and to doing further research. This chapter should help the teacher better understand how to work with students to make the lecture more effective.

The concluding chapter points out some of the broader implications of our system of formal education and how the successful teacher operates within that system. A summary of the major points completes the book.

Chapter Two

Some Advantages of Lecturing

Introduction

The reality of American education is that is is clearly a system of mass education. Our schools contain separate classrooms with a single person teaching a group of students for a specified period of time. Given the parameters of American education, teachers often depend on lecturing as an important method of instruction. After all, it is an effective way of dealing with a large group situation. Moreover, it is a direct, immediate, and simple way for the teacher to communicate with the students. Lecturing, though, has many more advantages in addition to these.

The Mind of the Teacher

An effective teacher is also active in the pursuit of knowledge. While it might seem self-evident, it needs to be stressed again and again that a teacher operates in the academic world. That is, the teacher is continually reading, doing experiments, chatting with colleagues, and writing. Intellectual activities form the basis of the teacher's life, and the teacher can never find enough time to read all the books, write all the papers, or attend all the conferences he/she might wish to. It is a never ending struggle to set priorities and live by them.

The classroom, then, becomes a place not only to repeat the time tested facts of the subject, but it also becomes the platform teachers use to articulate their own thoughts on the subject. As a result of their interest and devotion and years of work in the field, many teacher have discovered new information not yet published or available anywhere else.

Less dramatically, if the students are using an outdated textbook, as might be the case, the teacher can at least share the results of some of the more recent research that has been published in journals and monographs. Or, as often happens after years of work, the teacher might have found a unique way to unravel the secrets of a particularly difficult problem. Many times teachers are so busy teaching they never are given the opportunity to share their findings with their colleagues at professional meetings. But teachers are often familiar with the latest information or new ways of presenting the material, and their students are the ones who most directly benefit. It cannot be overstated how important it is for the student to have the opportunity to hear directly from an expert the latest and best information on whatever subject is under discussion. In an era of such rapid change, textbooks can do only so much, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to supplement and enhance the written materials students have available to them.

Reading a book has certain advantages over listening to a teacher lecture, but the one thing a teacher can do that a book

cannot is interact with the audience. A skilled teacher understands that personal contact is an important reason for using the lecture approach in the classroom. Eyes meet, voices are raised and lowered, the inflection of words noted, illustrations inserted, dramatic mannerism employed, and so on. There can be an electricity present during a lecture that is not there while reading from the printed page. In fact, if the teacher is too effective, the students can become so engrossed in the material they forget to take notes. Later, in the quiet of their rooms, however, they can usually remember what the teacher said and copy the main points down.

The classroom also lends itself to many other kinds of interaction. The teacher can ask students questions, and the students might ask the teacher some questions as well. It is sometimes necessary to pause and go back over material which the teacher senses has not been effectively received by the students. Examples to better illustrate the issue can be used, and sometimes live demonstrations can be staged.

Unlike a book which is so inflexible, the teacher can modify the lecture to meet whatever the situation seems to call for -- while the lecture is being delivered. It is this wide latitude in responding to student needs which seems to be a main reason why the lecture has remained a basic educational tool despite the advent of recent technological advances which, at first impression, would seem to negate the importance of the lecture. The experienced

teacher, however, often finds that nothing can replace the effectiveness of the lecture as an educational tool.

Types of Lecturing

The amount of personal contact between teacher and students can vary according to the subject being presented and to the wishes of the teacher. A lecture might last the entire period, or it might be used for something less than that. It can be either formal or informal, or somewhere in between.

A formal lecture is one often associated with professional meetings where the audience is not allowed to participate until the speaker is finished with the presentation. The language is usually quite formal, and the lecture is also tightly structured. The lecturer reads the carefully prepared script, looking up every once in awhile to make sure the audience is still there. Later, if the presentation was received well, the lecture might appear in a scholarly journal as an article.

Most teachers in high school avoid the formal lecture as a common classroom activity. It simply takes too much time and effort to research and write an original script. Many college professors depend on the formal lecture, but the heavy demands placed on professors limits the time they can devote to either researching or writing each lecture. As a consequence, too often their normal, everyday lectures are based on secondary accounts or even other textbooks.

The informal lecture is used by teachers at all levels of education. The idea is to carefully identify the material to be covered, but to leave the structure loose enough to be able to adjust during the presentation. Instead of telling students something, for example, the teacher might ask a series of questions. The answers they give are then used by the teacher as the basis of the lecture. Moreover, the teacher might want to use a number of examples to illustrate some point being taught. The examples might involve student participation. It is up to the teacher to determine how many examples to use before the students fully understand what is being taught. Thus, an informal lecture might require little direct lecturing on the part of the teacher. To be meaningful, however, the teacher must spend as much time preparing the informal as the formal lecture.

Whether the lecture is formal or informal, all lectures have a number of common characteristics. They all begin with an introduction which does just what it is supposed to do. The introduction not only begins the lecture, but it maps out the reasons for giving it.

Each lecture also has a conclusion. In it, the teacher summarizes the main points and focuses on the significance of the material. It is important for students to understand when class time devoted to a topic has come to an end.

Each lecture also is a distillation of facts. Students who are being introduced

to a subject for the first time have no idea how to decide what is important and what is not. To them, everything seems to be important. A teacher has the knowledge to guide the students to the most important information and to show them why. It makes no difference what style the teacher might use, the bottom line is the ability of the teacher to communicate a thought pattern which students can recognize and learn to develop themselves. This is why the lecture is so important in American education.

Ideally, an experienced teacher should be able to provide individual instruction for each student in his/her classroom. If this is not possible, the teacher must use group instruction. In addition to listening to occasional lectures, students might be given reading and writing assignments with some class time being spent discussing the results of their work. Even here, though, the teacher is needed to ask the right questions, guide the students, clarify issues, and generally lend professional knowledge to the proceedings. While the teacher might not lecture as much as in a larger classroom setting, the teacher is still expected to cover the material. And that means whether formally lecturing or leading a seminar, the teacher must be the intellectual group leader with a definite plan.

Stimulating the Teacher

The lecture method also provides the opportunity for students to stimulate the teacher. This classroom stimulation from

excellent students is quite important to the teacher. If in the class there are students who study, read widely, and score well on exams, the teacher understands that preparation for class is crucial because it is possible the students will be rather knowledgeable about the subject matter. It can almost be intimidating, although for the experienced teacher it is more of a challenge than a threat. Anyway, a class of good students will undoubtedly affect the quality of presentation.

Summary So Far

The lecture has been and will continue to be the most used method of instruction in American education. Effective lecturing is hard work and it takes years of experience to master the techniques. Indeed, teachers must always continue to monitor their performances if they are to make improvements, avoid some of the common pitfalls of lecturing, and understand the limitations of lecturing.

Some Limitations of Lecturing

A lecture is spoken, and, unless the students use tape recorders, it places great pressure on the students to remember everything being said. If something is missed, it is impossible to ever again hear it exactly as it was stated. The teacher, therefore, must be careful to set a pace fast enough to keep the students interested enough for them to take adequate notes.

There are some things, though, the teacher cannot control. If a student begins to daydream or to lose concentration just for a brief time the teacher will probably never know. Yet, the student might have missed an important point. If there is some sort of activity that distracts the student's attention, the teacher might not be aware of it. Yet, the student might be missing important information. It sometimes happens that a student's pen runs out of ink and it takes a few seconds to dig through pockets or books to find another one. While the student is searching for another writing instrument, the teacher continues with the lecture, unaware that at least one student is not paying full attention.

The limitation of the lecture method is the limitation of the teacher as a teacher. This means that the information given students in the classroom is only that information the teacher has learned or thought about. To overcome this limitation, it is necessary for the teacher to provide students with the titles of additional books. Such a carefully constructed bibliography integrated into the lecture can make the presentation more relevant to the students.

If one wanted to, one might be able to list dozens of reasons why the lecture poses difficulties for students, but every form of instruction has its limitations. If the teacher is aware of the major problems associated with the lecture method and is willing to deal with them, the teacher will find lecturing to be an

effective teaching tool despite the limitations.

Chapter Three

Some Characteristics of a Good Lecturer

Introduction

The ability to lecture well is a skill one acquires. Some individuals learn to stand before a group more quickly and naturally than others, but, with time and practice, most people who can enunciate clearly can become effective lecturers. In American education, most teachers need to acquire this skill early in their careers.

The process of learning to communicate through lecturing is a fascinating one, because one often begins by emulating the style of others. The first lectures the novice delivers, for example, might include the same voice inflections, the same phrases, and even the same gestures as someone the novice has listened to before. Perhaps it is unconscious, but it is definitely obvious because the lecturing style differs so markedly from the more normal delivery of that person.

Unfortunately, in most instances, someone else's style never quite fits another person. Every successful lecturer will sooner or later develop his/her own unique style, one that fits the person, and this comes through practice. This is not to suggest that one cannot learn from observing the techniques of already effective lecturers. It simply means that each person must do what he/she feels comfortable with in his/her own way.

Characteristics

Most effective lecturers, however, display some common characteristics. The first and foremost one is the ability to communicate with the audience. An exceptionally able lecturer is able to make each person in the class feel special, feel as if the lecturer is talking directly to that person. While there might be a collective communication going on, it is far more important for the lecturer to feel he/she is communicating with each student. This is why some teachers get so upset when a student falls asleep or when other students are not paying attention. The fact is that when this is happening, the teacher is failing to communicate with those students, and that is difficult for the lecturer to accept.

A reason the lecturer is able to communicate with each student has little to do with the art of lecturing, but everything to do with the art of teaching. One of the characteristics of the effective teacher is his/her awareness that each student is a unique individual. The more a teacher learns about the students, the easier it is to relate to them while lecturing. For instance, the examples used by the teacher to illustrate certain points might come from the teacher's knowledge of the community or of special circumstances surrounding the particular class.

The effective teacher lets the students know what is going to be covered, why it is going to be covered, some of the anticipated results of the activity, and

the manner in which all of the above is going to be accomplished. This brief overview of the unit is very helpful to students.

An effective lecturer also understands that the students are trying to take accurate notes. This means the teacher takes time to repeat the major points, leaves time for note taking, and is sensitive to indications that the students are grasping the major points. In short, the effective lecturer knows the reason for lecturing is to communicate with the students and not simply to hear oneself talk.

An effective lecturer uses several examples to illustrate the main points. If the teacher makes sure the examples fit, the students are more likely to grasp the main points. There is nothing more frustrating for a student than to have a teacher start lecturing when the bell rings and not stop until the end of class. The teacher might as well have handed the lecture out in written form. By using frequent examples, the teacher can check to make sure he/she is not going too fast or slow, talking too loudly or not loudly enough, and determining whether the presentation is doing what he/she said it would. In fact, it is sometimes possible to have extensive interaction with the students as they question or relate to the examples. The teacher might hope to complete a lecture in a class period, only to find the students so interested in discussing the material the time slips by too quickly. At least class participation is an indication that

some of the students are interested in the material.

The skill of the teacher is tested by the teacher's ability to keep student focus on the main thrust of the lecture and to use participation as a vehicle to explore the implications and significance of the main issues. One effective way to use examples is to share primary source material with the students. If, for instance, the focus of the lecture is on the nature of chemical reactions, the teacher might have the students mix chemicals to demonstrate the points made during the discussion. Or, if the teacher is spending some time on the American Civil War, the Gettysburg Address might be introduced to the students. Perhaps such a document will lead to some analysis and debate.

The good teacher, then, never forgets that the purpose of the lecture is to assist students learn how to learn. Incorporating primary materials is thus one important way not only to use examples, but also to inculcate analytical skills. So, a characteristic of a good lecturer is the understanding that the lecture is an introduction to a topic. If successful, the teacher will stimulate students to do additional research, reading, debating, and writing. Directing such activities requires teachers to be very knowledgeable. It is almost ironic that the more successful the teacher is in developing student interest in learning, the more difficult it becomes for the teacher to stay ahead of the students. The teacher truly needs to become an expert in the subject matter.

Mannerisms

A good lecturer, moreover, is careful to avoid any mannerisms that might distract from the lecture. A few examples of distracting mannerisms might include putting one's hands in one's pockets and rattling change while lecturing, maintaining eye contact with one or two people in the class or none at all, or using the same phrase over and over again. Another mannerism that is a little more difficult to deal with is voice inflection.

Sometimes without realizing it the teacher comes across as "talking down" to students - of demeaning them. Students will react with sullen hostility to such treatment. There is a place to use sarcasm and wisecracks, but the situation has to be right or else some students might be offended. Besides, there is no sense in using a mannerism which detracts from the main purpose of the lecture.

If the body message of the lecturer is that of one who is bored with the lecture, the students will quickly pick up on that and act bored themselves. If, on the other hand, the lecturer assumes the students need to be challenged, need to be shown there is some excitement in learning, then the lecturer must have some animation about his/her person during the delivery, some style and some character. Students will find themselves enjoying the presentation, and they are even likely to listen to what is being said.

Conclusions

It must be said that some individuals never do become effective lecturers. Practice and more practice just don't help. Yet, these same individuals are often exceptionally able in small group sessions where their role is that of a moderator instead of a lecturer. They are sometimes especially good at working with students on individual projects in the laboratory or in the library. But they cannot effectively "teach" a large group of students in a classroom setting. If that is the case, the teacher might as well change his or her professional responsibilities by getting out of the classroom and into some sort of administrative position. One might become a guidance counselor or a principal. One might even turn to research or library work.

On the other hand, if one has the ability to communicate effectively with a classroom full of students, the teacher should continue to develop better teaching skills. Lecturing is indeed an effective teaching technique, even if it is a skill that the teacher never completely masters. It is a challenge, though, to continue to work at it.

Chapter Four

Researching and Organizing Lecture Material

Introduction

Once the decision has been made to lecture, a teacher must spend time in preparing material appropriate for the presentation in the classroom. This chapter outlines the steps to take to effectively organize the limited time the teacher has for each lecture preparation.

The new teacher quickly learns that the research and writing skills developed in college do not necessarily work satisfactorily when one is preparing dozens of classroom units. That is not to say the English skills one acquires in college are useless, for there is quite naturally a good bit of overlapping between preparing a term paper and preparing a lecture. But the term paper is written as a finished product with complete sentences, footnotes, and even a bibliography. Once completed, the contents in the term paper cannot be easily rearranged.

A lecture, on the other hand, does not need to be in a publishable format; instead, it needs to be arranged to allow for the efficient insertions of new information as well as for the continual reorganization of the existing text. It is a major challenge to come up with a way to be able to continually update each lecture without rewriting the entire lecture each

time there is something to add or subtract.

Identify the Lecture Topic

The teacher must first have a clear idea what the lecture topic is before any other preparation can be started. This means the teacher must decide if a possible topic is suitable for a lecture. If it is, the teacher must decide how much time to the topic. Maintaining the focus on the main purpose of the lecture helps save time and effort and provides a helpful guide for the teacher when he/she is ready to begin the research.

STEP 1: CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE LECTURE TOPIC

Sources

All good teachers feel the need to become comfortably conversant with the subject matter they are teaching. To start, this means locating and studying the best available sources. One finds these sources for a number of reasons: to accumulate factual information, to understand the main arguments or implications, and to sort out the accepted boundaries of the topic to be discussed.

The quickest and most efficient way to find the best available sources is not to go to the card catalog in the library or to the open library stacks to find a book on the subject? Why not? Basically, for two

reasons. First, there is no way to know how credible the source is. Second, the purpose for finding books is to locate specific information for a class presentation. The teacher does not have time to read dozens of books cover to cover, but instead needs to locate only the pages or sections within books that will help the teacher better understand whatever it is that will be taught. The experienced teacher knows how to save time and effort by doing some exploratory work first.

This means spending some time looking at bibliographies in textbooks, looking through some of the journals for teachers for lesson plans and bibliographies, and studying the various annotated lists of books located in most libraries. It is surprising how much good material is available to teachers, so the time it takes to locate that published material is worth it. At least the teacher has a better idea what kind of information to look for as a result of this search.

It is also a good idea to present a balanced, or at least an informed and acceptable, interpretation of the subject matter. This can be done only by checking a number of books and articles. For example, if a social studies teacher uses the Enquirer as the main source on recent events and personalities, the view that the teacher presents to students is going to differ from that held by most scholars. A responsible teacher, for instance, would rather look further for other interpretations of the Kennedy assassination than that presented in the "supermarket" maga-

zines. The point is that even though a teacher might have spent years collecting raw data and subsequently organized it carefully for a lecture, the lecture will never be any better than the sources used. Students might be highly entertained by a gossip approach to lecturing, but that too is less than acceptable professionally. It is far better educationally to become familiar with the various ideas and interpretations and to let students understand which ones are more acceptable than others.

The second step, then, is identifying credible materials to read in order to prepare the lecture. As a result of this review of the literature, the teacher would then locate the materials to be used in preparing the lecture. The following different types of sources might be a yardstick for the teacher:

1. A recently published textbook which contains a good bibliography.
2. A standard general account used by scholars.
3. One or two more specialized monographs (biographies, histories, or specific accounts).
4. A sample lesson plan or annotated bibliography from a teacher's journal.
5. A book that contains some of the original documents referred to during the lecture.

With these books and articles in hand, the teacher is ready to begin to organize an effective lecture.

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE BOOKS AND
ARTICLES TO BE USED IN
PREPARING THE LECTURE**

Initial Organization

Instead of using either note cards or regular lined or unlined paper to take notes from books or articles, there is a far more efficient way to prepare a lecture. This method will probably sound too simple, but it will save time and improve the quality of instruction.

The idea is to use a separate sheet of paper for every lecture topic. Using either a stack of blank paper or a computer word processor with empty sub-directories, the teacher heads each page with a different topic. The first page should be called "Introduction," and the last page, "Conclusions." As lecture topics are identified, each one is given a separate page heading. Before long, the teacher might have twenty or thirty pages, all blank except for the name of the topics at the top of each page.

The teacher then must find information on each of the topics and take notes. If, for example, the teacher is reading a chapter from a textbook, the notes he/she takes on each topic will be on the appropriate page. If it is a new topic, another page can be easily inserted. Gradually,

the lecture begins to take shape as more and more notes are added to each page.

A concrete example might better illustrate how this process works. The topic of a lecture might be the life and times of some significant person. After the introduction, the next page might have as its title "Birth and Early Life." The next topic might be "Education." One could anticipate such natural topics as "Early Career," "Marriage," "Personality or Characteristics," "Contributions," "Death," and "Significance." By identifying these topics and creating a separate page for each one, the lecture outline begins to take shape. Then, once the research begins, it is relatively easy to insert new headings and/or rearrange the pages.

**STEP 3: HEAD EACH PAGE OF THE
LECTURE WITH A SEPARATE
TOPIC**

Collecting Material for the Lecture

After the initial organization by topic headings, it is time to begin filling in the pages with useful information. As a rule-of-thumb, one should consult a minimum of four sources on each topic. This number can vary greatly, but a good teacher feels more comfortable in knowing he/she is teaching the correct information as a result of researching in more than one book. Teaching without research is a fraud, and administrators should be as concerned about this as they are attendance

slips and bus schedules. What can be more important to quality education than quality instruction?

Suppose a teacher is trying to find out about the "Birth and Early Life" of the subject of the lecture. To start, one would probably go to a standard textbook for a bit of basic factual information. Because notes might eventually be taken from several sources, it is necessary to enter the author, title of the book, and publication date before taking any notes. Underneath this bibliographic entry, one would write brief notes about the birth and early life from that source. Once finished taking notes from the textbook (assuming that is the first source consulted), one moves on to the next page, titled "Education," and makes the same author-title-date of publication entry before taking notes on this topic. (See Appendix I for an illustration of this point.)

This process is repeated for every topic listed on each page. When one begins taking notes from the textbook, new topics might be discovered so additional pages will be inserted. For example, the teacher might find that the person's public career is of sufficient importance to require a separate entry. This change can be done by simply inserting a new page at the appropriate place in the outline.

On the other hand, the teacher might feel that there is too much material to be included within one of the topics. If so, it is easy enough to separate the material and have two or more topics, like "Birth"

and "Early Life," instead of just the one topic, "Birth and Early Life." The flexibility to continually modify the lecture as it is being written means the teacher has to make only minimal revisions before actually presenting the lecture to a class.

Once the notes from the textbook have been taken, it is time to take notes from another source. The teacher should always make a bibliographical entry before taking notes from a second or subsequent source. Then the teacher knows where the notes came from if students should ask questions which need additional research, or if factual contradictions were found during the research.

Of course, one purpose for reading additional books is to add to the notes taken from the first book. In other words, there is no reason to write down the same date of birth a second or third time. In all probability, the basic facts will be the same in all books, so it is a matter of obtaining additional facts. Incidentally, the more one reads, the more likely one will come across fascinating tidbits of factual information which always enliven a lecture.

A teacher also reads several sources to check the consistency in interpretations. This is especially true when the teacher is presenting a subject which requires some value judgement or personal evaluation, such as "Character" or "Personality": it is quite likely there will be different opinions. So, it is important to read several books to become aware of the

major controversies and/or interpretations. If one is teaching a unit which might be subject to a Marxist interpretation, the teacher should know the views of the authors being used for the lecture notes.

By using a topical outline, the teacher needs to read only those parts of the book germane to the lecture. The skilled teacher learns to skim through several books in a very short time because the teacher knows exactly what to look for. Moreover, because the notes on each topic are on a separate piece of paper, the teacher doesn't waste time by copying down the same information more than once.

**STEP 4: TAKE NOTES FROM AT LEAST
FOUR SOURCES ON EACH
PAGE OF THE LECTURE**

Looking for Gaps

After at least four good sources have been consulted and the lecture notes written, it is time to move on to the next stage in the lecture preparation. That is to look for gaps in information. It might be that after the research has been completed, there is still a blank page or two in the original outline. Or it might be that there is only one brief statement on an entire page. If so, it is necessary to either do additional research on that particular topic or to eliminate it from the outline. Either way, the teacher is in a position to make important modifications in the lecture before ever appearing before the students.

STEP 5: CHECK EACH PAGE FOR GAPS IN INFORMATION

Arranging Material for Class Presentation

Now that the research has progressed to the point that the teacher has enough material for the lecture, the teacher must now get it in order for class. To start, check each page once again. If there are six or more separate entries on a single page, it might be difficult to remember in which order to use them during the lecture. One can simply take a pencil and lightly number the order or sequence they will be used. That way, the teacher goes from "1", to "2", to "3", etc. during the presentation. This is far better than taking time to search all over the page, and it allows the teacher to move smoothly from statement to statement. Of course, if later on additional research is done and notes are added, the numbers can be easily erased and the order rearranged to incorporate the new material.

By implication, there is something else of great importance being stressed. Unlike a term paper, which is a formally written document, lectures are delivered from lecture notes which are carefully arranged so that the teacher can quickly refer to them without needing to be reading from a manuscript. It can be distracting to students when the teacher reads a lecture word for word. Students might wonder why the teacher doesn't let them have a copy of the lecture to read themselves, if that is how the class period is being

spent. It is far more stimulating to both the teacher and the students when the teacher uses the notes only to refer to specific facts or quotes. The teacher should know the material well enough to be able to deliver the majority of the lecture without further reference to any written notes.

On the other hand, most lectures are given only once a year. The time between presentations is too long for most teachers to remember everything they have researched in previous years. As a compromise between a formal script and no notes at all, the process described here is a quick and efficient way to maintain the lecture notes in a form that allows the teacher to pick them up months later and be able to lecture from them with only a brief review. Moreover, when the teacher comes across additional material during the year, that material can be added to the lecture on the appropriate page and be ready for use the next time the lecture is delivered.

There is one more point. A teacher could use 3 X 5 cards to lecture from instead of 8 1/2 X 11 pieces of paper, but index cards have two major disadvantages. First, because the teacher needs to shuffle through them, the students can be easily distracted. Second, because each card contains a single idea, it is difficult to hide the transition from one card to the next. It is much easier to lecture smoothly when several related statements are all located on one piece of paper.

**STEP 6: USE A PENCIL AND NUMBER
ON EACH PAGE THE ORDER
IN WHICH THE STATEMENTS
ARE TO BE READ**

Ordering the Pages

The next step is to put the pages in the order they will be referred to during the lecture. Assuming the lecture will include several pages, pencil in the page number in the top right hand corner of each page. An hour presentation might have between twenty and thirty pages, so it is important to have the pages in correct sequence. This is also important because during the presentation it is easy to reshuffle the pages and then not look at the lecture again for another year when it is time to get the lecture out again. It is sometimes difficult to remember exactly how the lecture was arranged unless the pages are numbered.

One real problem often occurs after the lecture is ready and the pages are all numbered. Perhaps one decides to read another book or article and comes across some additional information. Maybe that page where the new information is to be included is completely full. So, a new page must be started. That means renumbering every subsequent page of the lecture. How frustrating,, especially if the inserted page is something like page 1 or 2 out of twenty-five pages. To temporarily eliminate the need to re-number every page each time an additional page is inserted, one might consider a temporary expedient of

numbering the new page "b" of page 2 and the original page 2 as 2a. Now there is a 2a and 2b. As more and more pages are added, it will sooner or later be necessary to erase all the page numbers and start over again or else the manuscript becomes rather unmanageable. However, for the short term, it works to simply insert new pages by using the subclassification of the alphabet.

STEP 7: NUMBER THE PAGES IN THE
RIGHT CORNER WITH A
PENCIL

Bibliography

The next step is to assemble a bibliography. It is important to share with students the sources used in researching a presentation. A rather formal bibliography should be given to students on every topic. This allows students to do additional work and gets to the heart of what education is all about. Taking classes and earning a degree or diploma should not be an end in itself. Simply requiring students to take notes, and then to have them feed back the notes on a test, is only a part of the educational experience. It is just as important for students to be given some guidance to do additional reading once they have left school. The students will branch out into all kinds of activities, but their ability to know where to go to discover information is crucial to them all.

Providing a bibliography also helps a teacher maintain some academic standards. Using this technique, a teacher knows it is professionally unacceptable to simply duplicate pages from another book and read that material to a class. A good teacher will refer to and use many sources as a way to establish professional credibility with students.

**STEP 8: PREPARE A BIBLIOGRAPHY
TO BE SHARED WITH THE
STUDENTS**

The Introduction and Conclusions

One important part of putting the material together has thus far been skipped. That is the introduction and conclusions. This is the heart and soul of the presentation. Students can read the facts for themselves, but it helps them if a competent authority shares with them some insights about the importance and significance of the topic under discussion. In short, beginning a presentation by placing it in some reasonable context is necessary, and concluding the presentation with a well-thought-out series of summary statements might be just as important. This is where the real subtleties of teaching are most evident, and where the teacher must be most cautious in making statements. Teachers plant ideas in the minds of students, so they must be very careful and responsible in everything they do before a class of impressionable young people.

**STEP 9: CAREFULLY PREPARE THE
INTRODUCTION AND
CONCLUSIONS**

Final Preparations: File Folder

When the introduction and the conclusions have been completed, it is time to arrange the pages in the proper order and to place them in a file folder labeled with the title for the lecture. A cover page or table of contents which lists the main topics of the lecture should be added to the front of the folder.

**STEP 10: LABEL A FILE FOLDER AND
PLACE THE LECTURE NOTES
INSIDE**

Final Preparations: Review Before Class

The teacher should now be about ready to deliver the lecture. There are a couple more steps, though, one should consider taking before actually standing before the students. The material on the pages is simply raw data. In all probability, there are few complete sentences to read and few transition statements. In short, the lecture is not a written manuscript one takes off the shelf just before class and reads to the students. The lecture is a skeleton outline of the material. It only makes sense that one should spend some time re-reading the material and organizing it in one's mind just before the actual lecture. This should take maybe thirty

minutes, and it is crucial to the success of the lecture, no matter how many times the teacher has previously delivered it.

STEP 11: SPEND AT LEAST THIRTY MINUTES REVIEWING THE MATERIAL JUST BEFORE DELIVERING THE LECTURE

Final Preparations: Spelling and Pronunciation

Another time-consuming but important aspect of preparing to lecture is checking the correct spelling of the names and words that will be written on the board or shared with the students. It is so important to take care of the little details like this. It will make the teacher more comfortable teaching the material, and it again demonstrates the teacher's professionalism.

Finally, it is also terribly important for the teacher to correctly pronounce words. In fact, it is a good idea to copy a list of problem names, places, and events to be used in the lecture on a separate sheet of paper, and to look up the phonetic spelling of each word. It might not be possible to find the correct pronunciations in the library or from other books, so it is sometimes necessary to consult with a language teacher or with another expert. While it might seem like a minor issue, it really is at the heart of the profession, for the teacher who takes the steps necessary to achieve as close to perfection as possible, transmits to stu-

dents a clear example of what professionalism is all about.

**STEP 12: CHECK THE SPELLING AND
PRONUNCIATION OF TERMS
TO BE USED DURING THE
LECTURE**

Conclusions

The steps discussed in this chapter should make the teacher well prepared to lecture on a given topic. (See Appendix II for an outline of the steps to preparing a lecture as discussed in this chapter.) The material is in a good state of order, the major interpretations are understood, and there is a feeling of excitement about finally reaching that point where the research ends and the lecturing begins. To be sure, the students are now prepared to benefit from the hours of preparation, and the teacher can take some additional steps to get the class ready to listen to the lecture. These steps provide the basis for the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Student Study Skills

Introduction

The teacher who has followed the suggestions made in the last chapter should be not only well organized, but also rather knowledgeable about the lecture topic. It might be expected, then, that the students will have little trouble taking notes. As a result of the research, the teacher has learned the main ideas. Theoretically, all the students have to do is listen carefully to the lecture to benefit from the teacher's expertise. Quickly and without much effort, students should be able to learn the really important material while listening to the teacher lecture.

Unfortunately, the above assumption is seldom correct. It is more often the case for students to have little understanding of what the teacher is trying to cover in the lecture. Students often are too busy taking notes to think much about what they are hearing. It is sometimes hard for an overworked teacher to remember that students know little and could probably care less about the topic. What are clear transitions in the lecture for the teacher might be less clear to the students. Moreover, without realizing it the teacher might use terms students don't understand.

The theme of this chapter is that just as the teacher must spend hours carefully preparing a lecture, the teacher must also

spend some time before and during class preparing the students to take good notes. In addition, the teacher must be able to share with the students reasons why the lecture is important.

Bibliography

One important item that helps the student prepare for the lecture is the bibliography. One effective way to introduce a new topic to students is to give them a list of the important books and journal articles. By making a few statements about each book or article the teacher is outlining the major issues and thus helping the students understand what they should be listening for during the lecture.

The purpose of each book will be different, and each author will have his/her own point of view. The teacher can show how different interpretations arise and provide students with guidance on how to evaluate interpretations. Whenever controversy is involved, students tend to get involved. The skillful teacher exploits this natural tendency by using the bibliography as a way to involve students in debate and discussion.

It might be argued that high school students are not mature enough to evaluate different books. Well, they do so every day in every other aspect of their lives. Decisions are made based on their analysis of the situation. It might well be one of the most important functions of the teacher to assist students in learning how to make

better informed, more rational decisions. One way to do so is by evaluating the sources used in writing the lecture before the lecture is delivered.

**STEP 1: INTRODUCE SOME BOOKS,
ARTICLES, AND VARIOUS
INTERPRETATIONS TO
STUDENTS**

Pre-Lecture Homework

Teaching is such a difficult professional undertaking in part because there often are no requirements for a student before entering the classroom. One does not earn a starting position, one does not have a right to go to class because of competitive examinations. The student is there in the classroom without any special preparation, and the teacher is expected to "teach" -- whatever the situation.

If a lecture is to be understood by the students, it is imperative that they be required to become actively involved in the acquisition of knowledge and not simply passive recipients of teacher-oriented lectures. It is crucial, for example, to provide homework assignments for students before the lecture. These assignments usually take the form of "busy work," and they are rather easy to do. Examples of types of preparatory homework assignments include maps, time lines, vocabulary definitions, and bibliographical essays.

If students are prepared in this way before the lecture, the class time can be more productive and enjoyable for the students as well as the teacher. There can be class discussion based on what the students have learned. This way, students can more easily make the transition from the known to the unknown. However, for many students this transition requires effort and assistance from the teacher. Therefore, assignments that are comparative are especially worthy, because students are able to understand new material better if they have some basis for comparison.

Preparing students for the lecture might take longer than the lecture itself. When so much is learned by the students on their own the teacher needs to spend less time lecturing in front of the entire class.

**STEP 2: ENGAGE STUDENTS IN
PREPARATORY HOMEWORK
BEFORE THE LECTURE**

Post-Lecture Work

It is just as important for the teacher to take stock of what the students have learned by some sort of post-lecture activity. Indeed, the most common is the examination. But there are some other good activities that can be used effectively.

Most topics involve more than memorizing facts. There are often complicated

concepts the teacher hopes the students will master. If so, a problem-solving assignment might be appropriate. Students are required to provide the answer or solution to a problem that requires them to understand the underlying concept.

An important kind of assignment is the book review. One major problem in today's mass education is the lack of students' writing capabilities. One way to tackle this vexing problem is to require more reading and writing. Having students read essays, articles, or books, and to clearly articulate their reactions to what they have read requires the students to develop many important skills in addition to that of learning to write better. In all probability, students' conclusions about what they have read will differ, and the teacher can exploit these differences by allowing discussion to occur in the classroom.

**STEP 3: USE BOOK REVIEWS, EXAMS,
OR OTHER ACTIVITIES TO
EVALUATE STUDENT
LEARNING**

Lecture Outline

Another valuable tool that helps students gain more from the lecture is an outline of the major lecture topics. In essence, the teacher simply writes down the topic headings on the pages of the lecture itself and either writes the outline on the board or hands it out to the students. If

the teacher is even more ambitious, a more detailed outline of a page or two can be shared with the students. Such an outline gives students the opportunity to see the sequence of the impending lecture and to better understand what to expect.

Teachers know when they are going from one topic to the next, but the transitions are often obscure to the students. By following a lecture outline, and telling the students when each topic is to begin, the teacher makes it easier for the students to grasp the main points. If some space is left between lecture topics on a handout, the students should be encouraged to take their notes on the same page.

**STEP 4: PREPARE AN OUTLINE OF
THE MAJOR LECTURE TOPICS
FOR STUDENT USE**

Vocabulary Exercises

There is another good exercise that is of some value to both the teacher and the students: vocabulary exercises. To help make sure communication during the lecture will occur, the students might be given a list of vocabulary words. Before starting a lecture, the teacher might give the students a few minutes to look over the terms and to use a dictionary to find the definitions of those words they do not know. Such an activity gets the students emotionally ready for the lecture, and it intellectually better prepares students to understand what they are about to hear.

Moreover, such an assignment helps avoid the situation of students getting lost during the lecture because they are trying to spell the terms or because they have no idea what the terms mean. Finally, it is possible to forget to mention an important term during the lecture. By providing the students with a list of terms and giving them some class time to look the terms up in the appropriate books, the teacher can then hold students responsible for all the terms on the list, whether or not the terms were covered in class.

**STEP 5: PREPARE A LIST OF
VOCABULARY WORDS FOR
STUDENT USE**

Sources Used in Lecture

The teacher has probably depended on four or five books or articles for the majority of the lecture material. If the student wishes to find out more about what the teacher has discussed in class, the teacher should be willing to tell the student the sources he/she used. It is a motivation to students to be treated as scholars in their own right, and sometimes students actually follow the suggestions of the teacher and read extra books or articles.

**STEP 6: PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A
LIST OF THE FOUR OR FIVE
MOST IMPORTANT BOOKS AND
ARTICLES USED PREPARING
THE LECTURE**

Conclusions

If the teacher provides the students with all of the above suggested items, the amount of material produced for the students soon mounts up to as much as five or six pages per student for each lecture. (See Appendix III for an outline of the steps to take to prepare students for a lecture.) In fact, if the teacher prepares student materials for each lecture, the end result is a valuable workbook for the students. It is not unusual in education to require students to have a workbook for a class, and for either the school or the student purchase it. A typical workbook might have between 150 and 200 pages per course, and because of the limited number of copies printed, the cost to produce it might be several dollars. At first glance, it might seem that such a workbook is too costly for student use. However, it is a small price to pay to have the teacher involved in writing curriculum materials and to have students using materials designed exclusively for their classes.

One interesting sidelight often occurs once the materials are used. The teacher can never be completely satisfied with the lecture, and revisions begin immediately after the lecture has finished. It is sometimes difficult to move on to the next lecture because of the realization that so much should be done to improve the last one. This enthusiasm for the material is obvious to students and translates into more effective learning.

There is a sense of pride and accomplishment on the part of both the teacher and the students when locally produced materials are used. The teacher has more stake in the educational product if he/she is using his/her own materials. The students are proud to have a teacher who has written and published the workbook. In our society, an author is often held in high esteem, and for a teacher to also be author is an important ingredient in the professional credibility so necessary if the students and the public at large are to support education.

Teaching takes on a whole new exciting dimension once the teacher begins to write class materials. Suddenly, there is less time for other activities because of the need to continually read and write. The teacher becomes much more aware of the need for a controlled environment conducive to thinking. Fairly soon, the teacher begins to understand that one of the major, if not the major, value of classroom instruction is sharing with students the intellectual expertise a seasoned teacher has gained and is still gaining through hard work. Students enjoy listening to an expert who can go beyond the textbook and recount the story behind the story. Students can feel the excitement the teacher has for books and for learning. Lives are changed as students begin to pattern their own lives on the teacher who has unwittingly become the role model. What a challenge it is for the teacher to live up to the students' expectations and to continue to remain fresh and on top of the subject matter. What a reward it is for the teacher to know

that success means a better world for all of us. Careful preparation of students in the techniques of scholarship might be the most important contribution a teacher can make in a democratic world.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

There are many dimensions to successful teaching and learning, and the effective teacher is aware of the necessity to utilize a wide variety of instructional skills and techniques. One part of the education equation is the lecture. In fact, as has already been mentioned, the lecture, along with the textbook, are the most commonly used instructional tools in contemporary American education.

Sometimes teachers read from the textbook and call that lecturing. Other times teachers find other books to lecture from. If that is the sum total of the teacher's preparation, the lecture method has been misused by the teacher.

Because lecturing is often misused by classroom teachers, professional educators stress other teaching strategies. As a result, even though some lecturing is done by the vast majority of teachers, they have often received little formal assistance in learning the basic techniques of lecturing. Too often, lectures are boring, not well organized, and ineffective. This gives fuel to those who cry out against lecturing. Instead, maybe it would be better to help teachers become better lecturers.

Lecturing is first and foremost a sharing of facts and figures. The successful teacher must know the material. If that is all there is to learning, though,

the teacher might as well let the students read the textbook. The teacher can use the lecture method to teach other skills as well, including the following four major skills.

1. **Organizational skills.** The teacher assists the students in organizing the facts and figures being taught. By providing a lecture outline, for example, the teacher has already selected the major topics of the lecture. Students learn to figure out how to determine the major points and how to organize facts and figures on their own.

2. **Research skills.** Investigating the library for books and articles is an important research skill. The learned person is the person who knows how to find answers. The teacher can show students how a lecture is researched in the library. Lecture topics can be assigned to students who then have to use the library to do their research.

3. **Writing skills.** Writing is a basic form of communication in our society. The best way to learn it is to write. The teacher can use vocabulary words, essay assignments, and an almost limitless array of instructional techniques to supplement the lecture and teach writing skills. The lecture, then, is the core the teacher uses to introduce writing skills.

4. **Analytical skills.** The ability to analyze is a crucial skill, particularly since a democratic form of government is only as strong as the electorate. There-

fore, students must be asked to analyze problems and come up with valid reasons for their conclusions. The teacher cannot teach students everything; they can guide the students along the proper path and assist the students in their quest for knowledge.

There are many reasons why years of formal schooling are required, and all these reasons lead to one conclusion: academic learning is not an end in itself. Students are expected to become responsible citizens. Teachers are expected to teach those skills that are necessary for students to become responsible citizens. The lecture can teach some of those skills, including the ability to perceive the most important points, the ability to analyze, and the ability to think rationally. Above all, students understand the necessity to learn the facts and figures before reaching conclusions.

The effective use of lectures, then, must be seen as the main part of a larger educational process. The teacher must not rely totally on the oral presentation of the lecture, because the lecture itself will then fall far short of its potential as an educational tool.

It has already been pointed out that it takes hours to prepare a well-thought-out lecture. The teacher must also write effective assignments and grade them, thus many more hours are added to the process. It is impossible to be an effective teacher if one is expected to "teach" several hours each day. The more ideal educational

design might be for the teacher to lecture only a few times each week and to tie those lectures into student-centered assignments.

Another alternative is for the teacher to use the lecture as the central focus of the class, but to lecture for only a portion of the allocated time. A well-organized twenty or thirty minute presentation can be more effective than a two hour rambling discourse. If the lecture takes only part of the class period, the teacher will have time to ask questions, involve the students in discussions, and even provide students with written assignments. The lecture, then, is a group activity that sets the stage for individualized instruction.

In conclusion, the lecture method will continue to be an important teaching technique in mass education. Therefore, it is far more important to improve the level of lecturing than it is to belittle the technique and call for its abolition. As long as there are teachers facing dozens of students in a classroom several times each school day, there will continue to be lecturing. This is the root of the issue, and to solve the problems involved with lecturing may be one of the most important way to improve education in America.

APPENDICES

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Appendix I

Sample Page of Lecture

Birth

Heading (top of page)

Author, Title, date of pub
born in 1914
mother was 23 and father 32
second child, first boy

Author, Title, date of pub
born on August 11
second of 11 children

Author, Title, date of pub
born at 2 a.m.
born at home
no doctor

Author, Title, date of pub
weighed just over 3 lbs. at birth and not
expected to live - barely hung on to life
for several days - weak throughout early
years - maybe the reason he took to books
as a young boy

Appendix II

Steps to Preparing a Lecture

1. Identify the lecture topic.
2. Determine what materials should be used.
 - a. Check bibliography in textbook
 - b. Look through index of journals written for teachers
 - c. Read reference indexes in library
 - d. Find appropriate newspapers or magazines
3. Locate the materials to be read in preparing the lecture.
 - a. A recently published textbook
 - b. A standard general account
 - c. One or two monographs
 - d. A sample lesson plan or an annotated bibliography from a journal
 - e. A book of original documents
4. Taking notes for a lecture.
 - a. Use a separate sheet of paper for each new topic

- b. Use at least four sources for each topic
 - c. Check each page for gaps in information
 - d. Take all notes on each topic on same sheet of paper
 - e. Separate notes from different sources by bibliographic entries
 - f. If nearly a page of notes are taken, numerical pencil the order the notes will be used during the lecture
 - g. Put the pages in order and pencil in the page number at the top of each page
 - h. Prepare a bibliography to be shared with the students
 - i. Prepare an introduction and a conclusion to the lecture
5. Final preparations.
- a. Review the lecture notes just before class
 - b. Check correct spelling of names and words
 - c. Look up correct pronunciations of difficult words

Appendix III

Student Preparation

1. Introduce books and articles to students.
2. Assign student homework before delivering lecture.
 - a. Maps
 - b. Time lines
 - c. Vocabulary terms
3. Evaluate effectiveness of lecture.
 - a. Examinations
 - b. Book reviews
 - c. Additional readings
4. Prepare student materials.
 - a. Topical outline of lecture
 - b. List of vocabulary words
 - c. References used in preparing the lecture